Driving to Work

Across the river, St. Francis Hospital

looms above Bloomfield,

two wings of burnt brick, its medieval

spire a dark candle flame.

I’ve seared my mind in its heat

belted men to a steel bed

in the seclusion room, walked them

out of electroshock, clinging

to my arm. I’ve listened to their stories

in narrow confessional rooms.

I park on Penn Avenue

under the hospital’s brown shadow.

Above me, pigeons veer

in a wide circle, their angled wings

appear, then disappear.

They nest under these slate eaves

of sorrow, touched by clouds.

The patients have their own names for it:

*Saint Frig-it-all, Hell on Pills,*

*Crazy Eight, Edge City, The Tomb.*